Chapter Two/Five

MASKS OF MANGAIA

Jacqui Durrant

In his book *From Darkness to Light in Polynesia,* the Reverend William Wyatt Gill of the London Missionary Society (LMS) claimed that on the island of Mangaia, "dance itself was invariably connected with very serious evils, so that upon the establishment of Christianity it was entirely abolished" (W.W. Gill 1894:252-253). In hindsight, we might disagree, or even scoff at, Gill's assertion, for even as his statements appeared in print, far from Christianity having abolished dance on the island, Mangaians were devoting considerable energies to enhancing their dance performances, with the creation of some highly novel masks and costumes.

In hindsight, we might also consider that the cultural history of Mangaian pare 'eva (bark cloth masks) and that of the lesser-known katu tūpāpaku (carved wooden masks) is unlikely. Polynesia has no strong mask-making traditions, and these masks perhaps represented an unprecedented — but short-lived and idiosyncratic — departure from the cultural mainstream. Although they contain familiar elements in their artistry and design, no one can say that they resemble anything else from Polynesia. In fact, they look vaguely Melanesian.

Of course, none of this concerned the Mangaians who actually made the masks. They were interested in performance: the dance, music, and drama at celebrations and rituals long integral to Mangaian culture. To the Mangaians of the day, pare 'eva and katu tūpāpaku were objects of creativity and liveliness, experienced in the immediacy of present moments.

THE MASK DESIGNS

Pare 'eva are conical masks decorated freehand with painted designs. They are a part of the 'eva costumes, which included tiputa (ponchos sometimes stitched down the sides to form a short-sleeved shirt) and either a pāreu (wrap-around skirt) or short pants. These items were made of tapa (bark cloth). Principally made from 'aute (*Broussonetia papyrifera,* paper mulberry), tapa has also been made from the roots of the ava (*Ficus prolixa,* banyan), as well as kuru (*Artocarpus altilis,* breadfruit) and numerous other trees — especially in the makatea (uplifted coral) islands, including Mangaia. Although all pare 'eva share a common style, each group of masks has a distinctive look, the work of a particular artist or group of artists.

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FIGURE 1
Daniela Tangitoru in full costume. Tangitoru led a group of seven Mangaians who performed at the Christchurch Exhibition of 1906 (photo: Leslie Hinge, B.002818, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum, Wellington).

FIGURE 2
A pare 'eva collected on Rarotonga (at 'Arorangi) in 1899 for the Auckland Museum. Lettering on the mask seems to identify the wearer as representing the Mangaian district of Tamarua (photo: AM8353, Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland).

To make pare ‘eva, tapa, often finely ribbed, was pulled over and stitched onto a woven cane frame. Generally between 65 and 100 centimetres (cm) high, the masks were made either all of a piece, or in two parts: the cone and a lower section to cover the face. The conical form had variations, the most common being a four-sided pyramidal shape. The top canes of the underlying framework were pulled together to form a long tapering finial, which was sometimes divided into two. These finials were wrapped in tapa and decorated with sprays of black and/or white feathers, tufts of tapa streamers, or ‘au (native hibiscus) bast. The bottom edges of the cones were frequently finished by cutting over-hanging tapa into a fringe, echoing the sleeves, cuffs, and edges of the clothing.

Aside from their general form, the most distinguishing and immediately identifiable elements of pare ‘eva were their facial features. Elliptical slits were cut through the tapa to form eyes and mouth, which were further delineated with finely painted strokes radiating from their edges, probably representing eyelashes, moustaches, and beards. Alternatively, moustaches were painted as a thick line, almost always curling up at the ends, perhaps mimicking the fashionable Western waxed moustaches of the day. Some were also trimmed with plant fibre, fringed paper or tapa streamers, to give the appearance of beards and hair, or to cover the neck.

Around these facial features and continuing up the cone was an elaborate range of non-figurative patterns, usually painted in black. The patterns were drawn from traditional Mangaian decorative motifs; the most common from Mangaian tattoo designs (Buck 1944:130-131).[1] These included the manuta‘i, maurua, and variations on the ruru or kau, puwakewake, and tuata‘iti designs (see Mangos & Utanga 2011). Circular patterns, similar to those seen on some canoe paddles “evidently made for entertainments,” were also widely used (Buck 1944:405). At least one mask (illustrated by Baessler 1899) also used a diamond pattern, as seen on older examples of Mangaian tapa. Intriguingly, some masks featured delicate “botanical” patterns, which Scothorn suggested may reflect chintz fabrics of the Victorian era.[2]

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[1] The observation records were contemporary with the masks.

[2] Hilary Scothorn, Jul 2009, pers. comm.

FIGURE 3
A tiputa, 1906 (photo: FE002324, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum, Wellington).

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Designs were painted mainly in black, probably using commercial paint. Other colours used included red “from the pot of the missionary” and an ad hoc paint manufactured from a common laundry bleach sometimes known as Reckitt’s Blue or waschblau (washing blue) (Baessler 1899:33). Adding to this palette, some masks included tapa that was dyed yellow.

Radically different in appearance and construction to pare ‘eva, the carved wooden katu tūpāpaku masks are known almost only from photographs. They have figurative human faces, often with exaggerated eyes in which the whites are pronounced and contrast markedly with the pupils, and slender noses, prominent ears, and hair and beards made of such fibres as horsehair and hessian string. One surviving mask (D21.46), acquired by the Otago Museum in 1920 or 1921, is double-sided and retains a full head of ‘hair’ despite having lost its beard.

FIGURE 4
A pare ʻeva trimmed with hibiscus bast, c.1900 (photo: FE000626, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum, Wellington).

FIGURE 5
A pare ʻeva collected on Rarotonga (at ʻArorangi) in 1899 for the Auckland Museum is decorated with motifs derived from tattoo designs as well as motifs reminiscent of chintz fabric (photo: 8381, Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland).

WHAT IS IN A NAME?

Although the word pare refers simply to head coverings, such as hats or headdresses, ‘eva has been translated broadly as “the ceremonies of mourning or other ceremonies” (Savage 1980:65). Buck used it in relation to funerary celebrations — dirges accompanied by dances, recitals, and songs with soloists and choruses known as “death talks,” and dramatic performances, which followed dart-throwing competitions (Buck 1934:192-197). The word ‘eva is recognizable in the Tahitian word heva or heiva, the chief mourner in a Tahitian funeral ceremony. The mask worn by the heiva was a parae heiva. Another contemporary English translation of heiva (written as “heaver”) was simply “dancing” (Frost 1995:68). The thread running through these translations is that dancing and ceremony belonged together. It may have been through the secularization of such ceremonies that pare ‘eva came by their alternative name, pare tāreka (as suggested by Baessler 1899:33). The word tāreka is almost certainly derived from tārekareka, meaning to amuse or entertain, and applied to entertainments.

The only known name for the solid wooden masks used in performances alongside pare ‘eva or independently, is katu tūpāpaku.[3] While katu translates simply as skull, scalp, or head, the meaning of tūpāpaku is manifold. It can mean a dead person or corpse, although in the oral tradition of the Southern Cook Islands, tūpāpaku are “spirit beings or forces similar though not identical to the ghosts of Europe . . . the aronga te pō, ‘the company of the world of night or darkness’” (Clerk 1990:317). Shibata’s Mangaian dictionary defines it as “ghost, spirit of a dead person, also a human silhouette,” (1999:349); Buse’s Rarotongan dictionary defines it more particularly as a “mischievous ghost” (1995:526). Clerk, who collected stories concerning tūpāpaku in the mid-1970s, found that some minor atua (gods), such as the Rarotongan atua Ta‘akura, had been redefined as a tūpāpaku, which he suggested was done to limit their incompatibility with Christianity (1990:318).

MANGAIAN MASKS IN MUSEUMS

Perhaps fewer than 20 pare ‘eva and katu tūpāpaku and only a handful of matching ‘eva costumes exist in museum collections across the world today. With few exceptions, all seem to come from between the mid- to late 1890s and the late 1920s. Given their absence from earlier collections of Mangaian material culture (notably that of the British Museum), it is likely that the masks were only produced during that brief period.

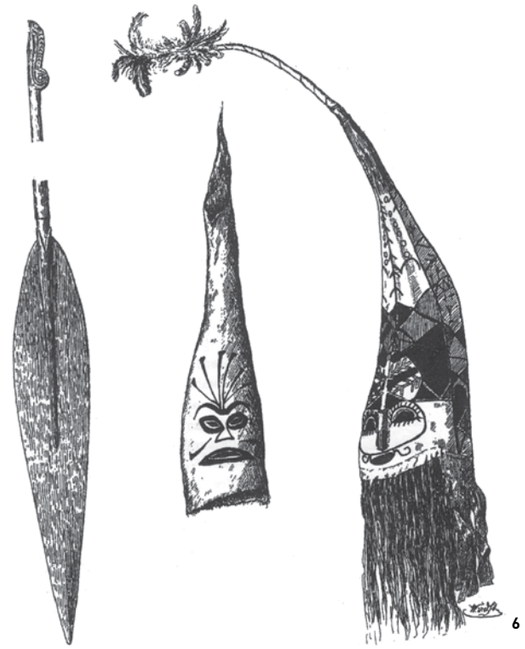
Unlike earlier collections of Mangaian material culture, masks were collected predominantly by ethnographers and museum curators. The earliest known pare ‘eva dates from 1897, when one (M.695) entered the collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. The last pare ‘eva (AM1009) to be acquired came into the collection of Auckland War Memorial Museum and was sourced on Mangaia in 1929. Despite being known as Mangaian masks, two masks in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin are attributed to Vaipai on Aitutaki; and at least four pare ‘eva, including two collected for Auckland Museum in 1899, were acquired on Rarotonga. Although these may have come from a Mangaian community on Rarotonga (at ‘Arorangi, from where the mask was collected), or from a visiting performance troupe, their locations of acquisition raise the question as to whether pare ‘eva were exclusively Mangaian phenomena.

There is little to indicate that the complexity of design was developmental. The pare ‘eva in Hobart is simple: it is covered in finely ribbed off-white tapa sewn together along the back midline, which has been twisted around a long, tapering finial that arches forward. The tapa is fringed along the bottom. Additional decoration is limited to roughly outlined facial features and coarse zigzag patterns around the cone in alternating black and (now faded) brown or red lines. However, Baessler collected another mask around the same time, and he described it as “fantastically coloured,” being elaborately painted in black, red, and blue. The cone had a rich variety of motifs including diamonds painted in solid colours. This mask had a long tapering finial that arched forward and was embellished with opposing sprays of cocks’ feathers. The bottom front of the mask was trimmed with a long beard of horsehair, while a fringe of yellow tapa at the back covered the neck (Baessler 1899:33).

In the main, Mangaian masks were acquired with the specific aim of augmenting museum collections. Unfortunately, virtually no information regarding their cultural context was collected at the time. The best information relating to the masks comes from independent contemporary photographers who recorded several performance troupes in costume. These photographs followed the masks and costumes into museum collections, but also with little accurate documentation.[4]

IN PERFORMANCE

In a static museum display, pare ‘eva and katu tūpāpaku suffer much reduced vibrancy. We can try to restore some life by imagining them in performance. Like so many Polynesian peoples in pre-Christian times, the different tribal groups of



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[3] This name comes from Otago Museum catalogue records. Although its authenticity is open to question, it is used here in the absence of other options.

[4] These photographs are, insofar as I know, held in the collections of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum in Hawai‘i and in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Auckland War Memorial Museum, and Te Papa Tongarewa Museum in New Zealand.

FIGURE 6
An early mask collected by Arthur Baessler (1899:32).

Mangaia lived with a cycle of celebrations and memorials that helped mark and shape time. These could be dedicated to the particular atua of the tribe, and/or to Mangaia's tutelary god, Rongo. In performances, they celebrated the distant atua who had created life, as well as those who had created Mangaia: Rangi, Te Akatauira, and Mokoiro, from whom they would trace their own genealogies and the division of Mangaia into its six puna (districts). They celebrated the achievements of their ancestral heroes, often considered atua, who were closer to the human realm. They also celebrated decisive historical battles. At some point, they came to refer to these celebration as their peu tupuna (ancestral activities).

Stories were told through dance and music, in such dramatic forms as ʻeva, poetic chants (peʻe), and songs, including mire (women's action songs), and ʻūtē (songs composed to commemorate an event, often one with a narrative or love interest). Plenty of action happened in stories recounting battles in which the victors gained control of productive taro lands: often bloodbaths that sometimes saw entire tribes erased, and not a few corpses stomped into the fetid mud of taro patches. Fugitives hid in the caves on the limestone makatea, fighting starvation, desperately seeking a means of regaining a foothold in society, and planning vengeance. There were also stories of love, jealousy, and betrayal. A legend that long remained a favourite and was still being performed in the 1970s was the story of the priest Tangiʻia, who demanded children to eat but was eventually outwitted with a bowl of poisoned kava (drink made from *Piper methysticum*) (McMath & Parima 1990).

Celebratory events took up to a year to prepare, especially as time was needed "for the making of the songs and the rehearsal of the performers [as well as] for the growth of taro . . . requisite for the grand feasting" (W.W. Gill 1894:253). The celebrations ran through the night, with as many as 20 songs performed and encored.

Such voyagers as James Cook, as well as LMS missionaries who first arrived in the Cook Islands in 1821, triggered cultural changes — some momentous, others piecemeal — to the form and cultural significance of the peu tupuna, which some people came to refer to as the peu ʻētene (heathen activities). The performances changed: first, people added the story of Cook's visit and later, they incorporated Christian elements and motifs into their traditional stories. However, the use of pare ʻeva and katu tūpāpaku in performance, which was a material cultural transformation, only came after decades of cultural contact with the non-Polynesian world.

It is impossible to fully recapture the performances peu tupuna in the late 19th century, but we can try to imagine them in the present tense, for example on May Day — a day set aside by the missionaries in the 1830s to replace the traditional festivities that came with the rising of Matariki (Pleiades). These peu tupuna celebrations involve different performance troupes and onlookers travelling from their respective puna across the island to watch and participate in the performances. There is a competitive spirit. As always, the performances have been coordinated by tumu kōrero — groups of people who have decided on what stories will be told and who have been busy composing new songs and dances. They have organized all the elements essential to lively and successful theatre: dancing, acting, singing, music, costuming, marionettes, and special effects.

Pulling on their pare ʻeva and katu tūpāpaku, with ʻeva costumes covering their bodies in traditional tattoo motifs, the performers of the day are transformed into heroes, atua, and mythical beings. In mock battles, they are warriors, using kōrare (spears) to stab fiercely at their invisible opponents. Uncanny tūpāpaku

With their faces hidden, the performers are liberated to take verbal licence.

move about, some simultaneously looking front and back, possessed of the double vision to see both the worlds of the living and te pō ('the night', the spirit world). With their faces hidden, the performers are liberated to take verbal licence. Other people beat drums with precise rhythms, mirroring the mood and action of the drama as it is playing out. The actors and dancers find opportunities for improvisation and humour. They occasionally make mistakes, and audiences are enjoying the creative re-telling of familiar stories.

In the 1970s, Raphael Timi'iti spoke of one such performance that he had watched perhaps 50 years beforehand, when he says Rongo was still often spoken of on Mangaia:

> *Coming from Veitatei village were Tāne-Kio (god of the sea) and Tāne-Ngakiau (god of the land) . . . . Identical masks covered their faces. Tāne-Kio and Tāne-Ngakiau walked to the open field where all the spectators were assembled. Arriving simultaneously from Tavaenga village was Rongo who was fifteen feet tall, clearly illustrating his mightiness. Rongo's spectacular appearance and procession frightened the children who were watching. Two men were inside Rongo's form, making it so mighty. The arms of the man on top were wrapped in kaka [the fibrous stipule at the base of the coconut frond] giving the impression of valour. Rongo's hair was made out of horsehair, and tī leaves covered his whole body. The legend that was performed illustrated the power of Rongo throughout the world. The two lesser gods, who were from Tahiti, had nowhere to hide from Rongo and were pleading with him to allow them to stay on the island. They tried to appease Rongo by dancing before him (in Apeldorn-Perry & Kareroa 1970s).*

Steven Savage wrote of a similar performance given by Mangaians on Rarotonga in 1907:

> *The Mangaians, who are by no means noted for piety, are the possessors of an unusually large selection of gods of remarkable qualities and appearance, and proceeded to call up some of them for our benefit. The great original god of Mangaia, Vari-tumu-enua, was the first to make an appearance in answer to an incantation. [Vari's] appearance . . . was indeed a fearful and wonderful one, as he slowly came into sight, an enormous figure 10ft high, with huge eyes that flashed up and down in time to the music, and arms waving a sort of general benediction to all his people. . . . By the aid of a similar combination of unholy sounds another famous Mangaian god, Tumuteangaoa, the echo god, was invoked and beguiled into showing off his powers in that connection. This was not quite such an awe-inspiring appearance as the former one, Tumu being a jovial and friendly deity, who went through a number of antics by way of introducing himself, and even insisted on shaking hands with some of the onlookers. . . . But perhaps the most extraordinary of all the gods was Avatea (the great dawn), who was half man half fish — not as a merman, but lengthwise. He appeared high up in the air (suspended by rather too evident means and, during the rendering of the "himene" in his honour, performed sundry fanciful acrobatic feats as evidence of his approval (Savage in* Otago Witness *1907:77).*

A photograph (Bishop Museum SP_204436), taken of a travelling performance troupe at Taputapuatea in 1907, roughly mirrors both Timi'iti's and Savage's accounts. Among the performance troupe, there is one distinctively masked figure wearing pāreu kiriʻau (hula skirts) on his upper and lower body. At the rear

FIGURE 7
A performance troupe on Rarotonga, at a Cook Islands Annexation Celebration, August 1907. Women also participated in the performances (photo: Stephen Savage, SP_216961, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu).

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of the troupe stands a colossal figure dressed in tapa with 'tattooed' arms, its head topped by three marionettes with limbs that could be jostled by rods. This large figure, which commands our attention even after 100 years, could easily be Rongo accompanied by his three sons, although one unknown owner of a copy of this photograph (Turnbull Library PA1-f-126-06-1) recorded the figure as Vari, coupled with the smaller atua 'Tāne-Kiao.'[5]

Not all of the stories were traditional: in another photograph (Te Papa B.027735) a man with long hair effected by a wig stands at the centre of the group — now entirely masked — holding a flag used to represent the Kingdom of Rarotonga prior to its becoming a British protectorate in 1888. He would appear to be the leader of kōrare -brandishing warriors in a far more contemporary story.

In tārekareka, Mangaians not only amused themselves; they also continued to entertain notions of what it was to be 'Mangaian' — or rather, Mangaians of distinct tribal genealogies. The masks, stylistically unique to each performance troupe, allowed these groupings to be made visible.

[5] Perhaps a misspelling of Tane-kio ("Tane the chirper") or Tane-ngakiau ("Tane striving for power"), variants of the major god Tane. As Buck noted, "The original god Tane has had many attributes attached to his name which in the course of time have come to be regarded as distinct gods" (1934:163).

FIGURE 8
A performance troupe on Taputapuatea, c.1907. The large figure probably represents either Vari, the creator, or Rongo, with the lesser figure being Tāne-Kio or Tane-ngakiau (photo: PA1-f-126-06-1, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington).

FIGURE 9
A Mangaian performance troupe on Taputapuatea, c.1907 as illustrated previously. The performer at the centre of the group holds a flag used to represent the Kingdom of Rarotonga prior to its becoming a British protectorate in 1888 (photo: B.027735, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum, Wellington).

A MELANESIAN INFLUENCE?

Mask-making in Polynesia was virtually unknown at the time of European contact, and the most notable exception to the rule — the Tahitian parae heiva masks used in mourning ceremonies — bear no artistic resemblance to either pare 'eva or katu tūpāpaku. It is possible that Mangaian masks could have emerged as an entirely local phenomenon. They do have some local antecedents: in *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific*, William Wyatt Gill recalls the 1820 performance of "A Day Song for Maaki's Fete" by Tangataroa, in which six men in masks represented "warning birds", "incarnations of Tane" which came from "the sunrising" (1876:49-50); and in his recollections of 1839, Maretu records that in May Day celebrations "children were adorned with heathen decorations, such as long tresses of human hair and conical feathered headdresses" (M. Crocombe 1983:126). Again W. Wyatt Gill recounting the 1852 May celebrations on Mangaia wrote of some performers wearing "curious masks, others chapelets of flowers. . . ." (1853:30). Nevertheless, the visual appearance of the pare 'eva masks does suggest Melanesian inspiration.

The possible Melanesian origins of Mangaian masks is supported by Arthur Baessler, who collected four pare tāreka, almost certainly on his third voyage to the Pacific between 1895 and 1898. Baessler asserted that masks had been recently imported into Mangaia by Cook Islander missionaries who had returned from working in Papua on the island of New Guinea. Baessler wrote the senior LMS missionaries could not tolerate the Papuan climate and preferred to send Polynesians in their place. These included Cook Islanders whom they had trained at the LMS school in Oneroa (Mangaia) and at their theological college in Avarua (Rarotonga). Baessler wrote that, as soon as these Cook Islanders were away from the "watchful eyes" of their European superiors, they took inordinate pleasure in the indigenous "customs and amusements" of the Papuans. When the Reverend James Chalmers (the senior missionary in the Papuan Gulf) was informed of the situation, he sent the offending teachers home — whereupon they "immediately began imitating what they had seen" (Baessler 1899:33). Baessler's account certainly has the feel of a superior ethnographer revelling in the notion that the Islander missionaries trusted by the LMS to teach the gospel had so easily 'lapsed' once left unsupervised. Despite this potential bias, Baessler's statements regarding this cultural transference are straightforward enough to be worthy of consideration.

Cook Islander missionaries were fundamental to the establishment and running of mission stations in Papua New Guinea throughout the 1870s and 1880s (Chalmers 1884:3, Chalmers in Lovett 1902:321; M. Crocombe 1982:55-78; Garrett 1982:207-208). In particular, Chalmers — ably assisted by the renowned Mangaian missionary Ruatoka — was responsible for expanding missions around the Papuan Gulf. Not only did Ruatoka guide the missionaries' first contacts with the Papuans, but his long career in Papua saw him supervising mission stations, particularly in the absence of European missionaries, as well as selecting and placing new teachers in stations along the Gulf (Lovett 1902:302; M. Crocombe 1982:55-78; Garrett 1982:208-210).

However, the efforts of Chalmers and Ruatoka were frustrated by a lack of personnel. In 1888, Chalmers lamented, "I have long been anxious to get right West of Orokolo [in the central Gulf], and did hope to do so by now; but other places require teachers, and except Rarotonga all South Seas missions have failed us in supply" (in Lovett 1902:321). With human resources stretched thinly, Cook

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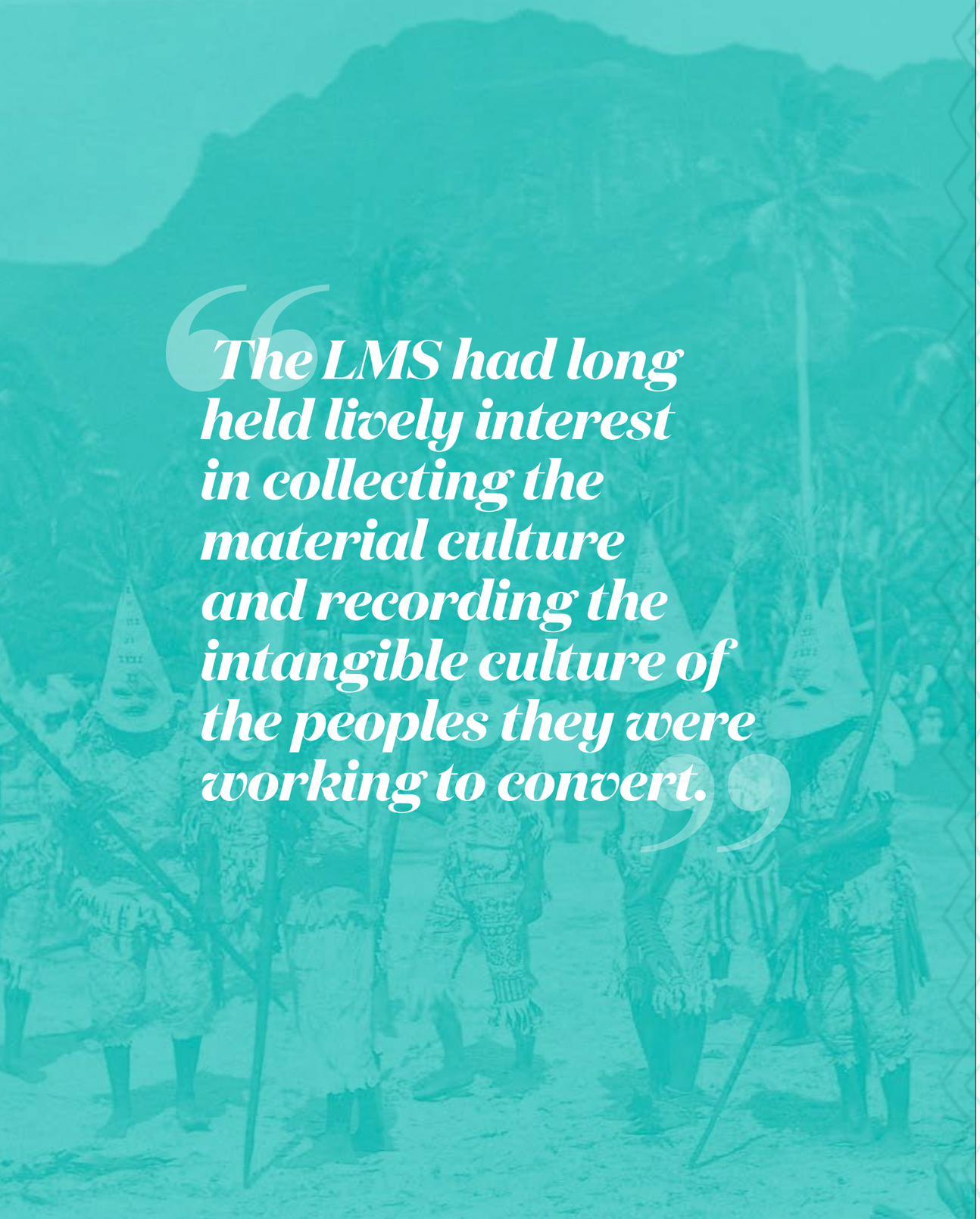
FIGURE 10
Pare 'eva worn by a troupe of seven Mangaians, led by Daniela Tangitoru, who performed at the Christchurch Exhibition of 1906-1907. The masks were comparatively homogenous, presenting a strong uniform identity (photo: FE002323/1, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum, Wellington).



“The LMS had long held lively interest in collecting the material culture and recording the intangible culture of the peoples they were working to convert.”

Islander missionaries lived remotely from the main stations, and for survival, shared the daily lives and customs of the local Elema peoples, including observing ceremonies in which masks played an important role.

If the Islander missionaries were interested in the masks used in performance and ritual, they shared general interest typical of the broader LMS culture. The LMS had long held lively interest in collecting the material culture and recording the intangible culture of the peoples they were working to convert. Sometimes their collection revolved around using such objects as evidence of the ‘heathen’ ways of the peoples they were working to Christianize; sometimes they sold pieces and collections of material culture to raise funds for further mission work.

In New Guinea, Chalmers and Gill exemplified this pattern (e.g., Welsch 2006:80). In particular, far from wanting to see all evidence of ‘heathen’ rituals obliterated, Chalmers preserved Papuan Gulf masks that would otherwise have been destroyed or discarded at the end of ceremonies. Accompanying Motuans from Port Moresby on their annual trading mission to the Papuan Gulf, Chalmers travelled as far west as the Elema villages of Vailala, Orokolo, and Maipua (Chalmers 1884:3) — where he collected tapa masks:

> *As all the masks are burnt at the close of the ceremonies each year, he tried to secure some; they refused, but, assisted by a few friends, he secured seven, and had them hidden away in the dubu [hut], but neither love nor tomahawks could secure [a large representation of the spirit] Semese. Soon fires were lighted and masks, coats and kilts were ablaze (Robson 1903:133).*

Aside from the cultural exposure of Cook Islander missionaries to the masking traditions of the Papuan Gulf, some basic similarities between the masks of these regions and those of Mangaia are evident. The Elema peoples made eharo (masks created primarily for amusement) and kovave (masks used in rituals) to entertain. Eharo had a comical aspect and were referred to as “things of gladness”; kovave were used in initiation ceremonies for young men, who wore them while re-enacting stories through dance and song (Gunn in Gunn & Geary 2006:92). Like pare ‘eva, the eharo and kovave masks were frequently conical and made of tapa stretched over a wicker frame. They were likewise trimmed with tufts of plant fibre and had fringes of fibre from the bottom of the mask — although, being designed to cover the shoulders and upper torso of the wearer, these fringes were more extensive than those of the pare ‘eva. Unlike pare ‘eva, sometimes the finials of the Elema masks were topped with animal figures, and some faces had a long mouth with sharp teeth, as well as triangular projections representing ears. However, at least one surviving pare ‘eva has these projections (Bishop Museum 06308).

Comparisons can also be made between the katu tūpāpaku of Mangaia and the masks of the Torres Strait Islands, where the LMS had a mission station and school on Mer (Murray Island), which itself became a staging post for mission ships. Torres Strait Islander masks were generally worn in celebratory, funerary, and initiation ceremonies, in which ancestors were also commemorated (David et al. 2004:19). The masks were often lively in their presence. Like katu tūpāpaku, they have highly figurative faces with staring eyes in which bright whites throw black pupils into sharp visual relief. They also often have slender noses, fibrous hair and beards, and pronounced ears. Formal comparisons between Torres Strait Islander masks and katu tūpāpaku are difficult as most katu tūpāpaku can be only seen in photographs. However, masks produced on Mer, such as a dogai (witch) mask of a type originally worn during a dogaira wetpur (a harvest feast and a dance) now in Cambridge Museum of Anthropology (MAA: 1986-09-15), make for a fascinating, if speculative, comparison.

There is one oral tradition that describes a resident LMS missionary, the Reverend Eastman, as forbidding the annual May Day celebrations featuring the peu tupuna, and replacing them with the biblical pageant of Nuku Day.

If Mangaian masks did emerge during the period in which Cook Islander missionaries were exposed to Torres Strait Islander and Papuan Gulf masking traditions, the subsequent transposition of these traditions to Mangaia would have been swift. As Davidson observed, the development of masks on Mangaia had to occur later than 1885, given that almost no Cook Islander missionaries had returned home by this date (1997:171). This does not conflict with Baessler's story. If his story is correct, the cultural transference certainly would have been an unforeseen consequence of cross-cultural contact in the Gulf.

With hindsight, it would be easy to view Mangaian masks as evidence of extraordinary cultural change. However, the Mangaians of the day may have registered them quite differently. In context, they were only one material facet in the creative renewal of performances that had been going on for generations. In this sense, change was continuity. The peu tupuna was an "extraordinarily flexible art form" that readily incorporated new elements, and, although their performances saw them in the process of reconciling beliefs contrary to the prevailing Christianity, they remained indisputably Mangaian (McMath & Parima 1990:412). Although the costuming had changed, the performances were not necessarily intrinsically different.

We can only guess at why these masks disappeared. There is one oral tradition that describes a resident LMS missionary, the Reverend Eastman, as forbidding the annual May Day celebrations featuring the peu tupuna, and replacing them with the biblical pageant of Nuku Day. That the masks retreated as the peu tupuna became increasingly Christianized is one possible explanation of their departure; another explanation being that they disappeared as the 'aute (paper mulberry) from which they were made was grown less frequently, although conversely, tapa continued to be made from other tree species. It is also possible they simply fell from fashion. The carved wooden masks survived longer, transformed into biblical characters.

Today pare 'eva and katu tūpāpaku remain objects of mystery. For us, they hold the capacity to inspire wonderment: at the experiences and beliefs of the people who used them, at the individuals who first engaged the artistic licence to make them, and at those around them who willingly adopted their creative vision.

FIGURE 11
The same performance troupe on Taputapuatea, c.1907 as illustrated previously in Figure 9. Two people are wearing figurative masks that may have been known as katu tūpāpaku (photo: C23697, Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland).

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GLOSSARY

‘are	house
aronga te pō	the company of the world of night or darkness
atua	god
‘au	*Hibiscus tiliaceus,* hibiscus
‘aute	*Broussonetia papyrifera,* paper mulberry tree
dogai	witch (Torres Strait Islands)
dogaira wetpur	harvest feast and dance (Torres Strait Islands)
dubu	hut (Papua, PNG)
eharo	mask used in performance in the Papuan Gulf, created primarily for amusement, a ‘thing of gladness’ (PNG)
‘eva	ceremony for mourning
heiva	chief mourner in a funeral ceremony; dancing (Tahitian)
heva	see heiva
kaka	fibrous stipule at the base of the coconut frond
katu	skull, scalp, or head
katu tūpāpaku	Mangaian carved wooden mask
kau	name of a tattoo motif
kava	intoxicating drink made from the roots of the *Piper methysticum* plant, and the plant itself
kōrare	war spear
kovave	mask used in rituals in the Papuan Gulf (PNG)
makatea	raised formation of dead coral that divides the interior of the island from the coastal area below
manuta‘i	name of a tattoo motif
Matariki	the Pleiades
meitaki ma‘ata	thank you very much
mire	women’s actions song
parae heiva	mask worn by a heiva (Tahitian)
pare	head covering, including hat, headdress, mask
pare ‘eva	Mangaian mask made of bark cloth
pare tāreka	see pare ‘eva
pāreu	sarong, wrap-around skirt
pāreu	kiri‘au hula skirt
pātē	drum
pe‘e	poetic chant
peu ‘ētene	heathen activity
peu tupuna	ancestral activity
puna	district
puvakevake	name of a tattoo motif
renga	tumeric
ruru	name of a tattoo motif
tapa	cloth made from the bark of the paper mulberry tree
tāreka	amuse, entertain
tārekareka	amuse, entertain
tī	*Cordyline terminalis,* plant
tuata‘iti	name of a tattoo motif
tūpāpaku	dead person or corpse; spirit being or force; human silhouette; mischievous ghost
‘ūtē	song composed to commemorate an event
waschblau	washing blue (German)
te pō	‘the night’ or spirit world
tere tere	literally, to peel, slip, or slide; to travel
tiputa	poncho or short-sleeved shirt
tumu kōrero	knowledgeable group of people who decide which stories will be told and who compose new songs and dances
vaka	canoe